(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

Our conscience as fellow humans and as Members of the United Nations dictates that we support the resolution to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia and Herzegovina. Inertia or inaction now would only deal a cruel and deadly blow to the international law and legitimacy; all our faith in this great institution - the United Nations, which was based on the concept of "collective security" - would suffer a fatal setback, and the soul of the United Nations, if not the United Nations itself, would wither away with the painful end of this tragic drama as we see it.

We, the peoples, cannot be seen to be parochial and selective in reading the Charter. All the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter are as sacred as those of any other Chapter.

Naive as it may seem, we cannot just watch a fellow human being on his last breath, dying slowly, while critical oxygen is being withheld, the more so when we fellow human beings around seem not yet to have succeeded, regrettably, in our collective efforts to reverse his imminent cardiac arrest.

My Government therefore firmly believes the present debate in the Council will culminate in the unanimous adoption of draft resolution S/25997, which alone can not only save the Bosnians from elimination, but also deter the aggressors and persuade them to seek a negotiated political settlement.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Costa Rica. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. TATTENBACH (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): I begin, Sir, by warmly congratulating you on having assumed the presidency of the Council, and by greeting you and the other members of the Council. I wish

(Mr. Tattenbach, Costa Rica)

also to tell you how pleased I am at the way in which you are directing the affairs of the Council, which holds so much responsibility for the future of mankind. I am sincerely grateful for the opportunity to address the Council.

About a year ago I had the honour to express in the General Assembly the anguish and indignation caused in my country by the serious violations of the Charter and international humanitarian law that were occurring daily in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We could not have imagined then that a year later the situation would still be the same or, if that were possible, even considerably worse.

One must therefore conclude that notwithstanding its many good intentions, the international community has not managed to find a way to remedy that dreadful situation. As a result it is necessary to consider new options, and it is to them that I direct my remarks.

A year ago we warned that an independent, sovereign State, Bosnia and Herzegovina, formally recognized by the United Nations, should not be deprived of access to what it needed to exercise its inherent right to self-defence, whether individual or collective, as guaranteed by Article 51 of the Charter. Today, Costa Rica, which has no standing army and which rejects the use of arms as a way to resolve disputes, believes that even worse than the rumble of the cannons of an aggressor is having to succumb, defenceless, to the aggressor because one's hands are tied as a result of an unjust international agreement.

My delegation therefore urges the Security Council as strongly as we can to lift the embargo on Bosnia and Herzegovina's acquiring arms to defend itself, so that we may prevent as serious a situation as the virtually total dismemberment of that State and the continuation of the monstrous violations of humanitarian law.

(Mr. Tattenbach, Costa Rica)

We believe that in this case one cannot ignore the Charter and one of its fundamental Articles by virtually denying a State the right to survival and subjecting it to a slow, cruel death. Ethical and legal duty both oblige us to keep Article 51 of the Charter intact. We have all solemnly committed ourselves to that.

We therefore today shoulder our responsibility, however many other considerations may be involved, and declare ourselves, just as we did recently at the World Conference on Human Rights, clearly in favour of the sacred right to self-defence by all necessary means.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of Costa Rica for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Slovenia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. KOVACIC (Slovenia): Let me begin by expressing our appreciation at seeing you in the Chair, Sir. We are convinced that your ability and skill will contribute significantly to the success of the Security Council. Let us also express our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Vorontsov of the Russian Federation, who presided over the proceedings of the Security Council in May.

Later today the Security Council will take action on an important proposal submitted by the group of Non-Aligned members of the Council. The proposal concerns the situation arising from the armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and calls for immediate action to preserve the territorial integrity and political independence of that country - a Member State of the United Nations - and to put an end to the genocide perpetrated against the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(Mr. Kovacic, Slovenia)

The Security Council has devoted much of its time to the armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina in recent months. The resolutions adopted thus far have not yielded the expected results, and have in some cases avoided the crucial issues. Now there may be one of the last opportunities for a change.

Slovenia is not a member of the Security Council and has not participated in the preparation of the draft before the Council. However, we wish to state certain basic principles clearly and unequivocally.

First, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is neither a civil war nor an ethnic conflict. It is a war of aggression perpetrated from outside Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it is a war for territory. Every State has the inherent right, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, to legitimate self-defence. This right should not be denied to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Secondly, genocide must be stopped, and deeds, not mere words, are necessary. This is the most elementary commandment of any morality.

Thirdly, the Security Coucil must find a way to preserve the existence of a United Nations Member State, or the whole system of collective security will be put in jeopardy.

Fourthly, preservation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a vital requirement for peace and political stability in south-eastern Europe and, indeed in Europe as a whole.

There comes a time when the responsibility of the Security Council requires the most serious reflection and decision. This is such a time.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of Slovenia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Ukraine. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. KHANDOGY (Ukraine) (interpretation from Russian): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June. We are certain that under your experienced guidance the Council will find the best path to a solution of the item on its agenda today.

My delegation wishes also to express its appreciation to the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Ambassador Yuliy Vorontsov, for the excellent way in which he presided over the work of the Security Council in May.

There is no need to emphasize the importance of the subject before the Council today or the heavy responsibilty the Council bears as it takes up this item. The continuing tragedy in Bosnia and Herzegovina claims new victims daily. It brings more suffering and more destruction. That once-flourishing land is now devastated. We constantly witness terrible bloodshed.

It is clear that there is no alternative to a peaceful negotiated settlement. As it has in the past, the delegation of Ukraine supports that approach; we think it can bring peace to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We share the view that a settlement of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be based on the following principles: an immediate cessation of hostilities; withdrawal of forces; an end to "ethnic cleansing";

(Mr. Khandogy, Ukraine)

recognition of the right of all Bosnian refugees to return home; and preservation of the territorial integrity and independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In that connection we appeal to members of the Council to display wisdom as they consider and act upon the draft resolution before them. Any careless step, however advisable it might seem now, could lead to more bloodshed and to an escalation of the conflict. That would only increase the suffering of the civilian population and make it even more difficult to find a way out of this impasse. That in turn would pose a greater threat to the security of United Nations peace-keepers and would make it even harder to protect the civilian population and deliver humanitarian aid. It would add to the losses currently being experienced.

Ukraine has contingents stationed in the region of Sarajevo, one of the most dangerous in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Lifting the arms embargo imposed by resolution 713 (1991) in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina would make the position of the Ukrainian troops there even more difficult and uncertain. We have already sustained considerable losses and many casualties.

As it considers this measure, the Security Council should also consider additional effective measures to protect United Nations peace-keepers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are concerned at the real possibility that hostilities would be intensified if the arms embargo were lifted in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ukraine favours strict compliance with the resolutions already adopted by the Security Council. We also think it might be an important step to put under effective United Nations control all heavy weapons now at the disposal of the Bosnian Serbs. In our opinion, that would lower the level of

(Mr. Khandogy, Ukraine)

military confrontation in the region and would remove from our agenda the question of lifting the embargo in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In conclusion, we reiterate that Ukraine considers that the only way to resolve the conflict is to pursue the peace process. We are convinced that permitting more weapons into Bosnia and Herzegovina will not bring peace. It will only bring more suffering and more victims.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of Ukraine for the kind words he addressed to me.

I wish to inform members of the Council that the following have become sponsors of draft resolution S/25997: Albania, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates.

The representative of Morocco wishes to make a statement in exercise of the right of reply, and I call upon him now.

Mr. SNOUSSI (Morocco) (interpretation from French): In his statement, Mr. Djokic referred to the sponsors of draft resolution S/25997, and claimed that they were not committed to a peaceful settlement of the conflict but rather to advancing "their own limited political objectives. In view of that totally unwarranted, erroneous and unfounded assertion, and without wishing to enter into polemics, I am obliged to address some questions to Ambassador Djokic.

Mr. Djokic: Are you serious when you speak of a peaceful solution? Do you know the meaning of a peaceful solution? Can there be no peaceful solution other than that envisaged by the Bosnian Serbs? Can there be no peaceful solution other than one founded on what has been inflicted upon the

(Mr. Snoussi, Morocco)

disarmed Bosnians in terms of "ethnic cleansing", torture and camps? How can a peaceful solution be imposed on those who do not desire peace and who do not accept peace, but who only strive for hegemony, aggrandizement and the subjugation of others? What kind of peace are you talking about?

Let me remind you, Mr. Djokic, that the authors of the draft resolution, whom you dismiss so lightly, are so committed to peace that they unreservedly backed the Vance-Owen Peace Plan to the very end. In fact, they persuaded the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, despite their reluctance, to accept it.

Mr. Djokic spoke of attaining "limited political objectives". If you, Mr. Djokic, take a "limited objective" to mean saving a people that is daily being exterminated and that has the legitimate right to self-defence and to existence, then that is the objective pursued by the non-aligned countries and all other countries that want to remind the international community that it must be careful in dealing with people who sow such confusion.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that that is the case.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

Before putting the draft resolution to the vote, I shall call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. OLHAYE (Djibouti): The draft resolution before the Council is the culmination of a series of failed policies, decisions not fully implemented or decisions ostensibly deferred indefinitely when implementing them could have made a significant difference to the plight of a million defenceless Bosnians. And now Bosnia's future political structure is in the process of being seriously undermined as the parties are set to institutionalize their spoils of war.

Saving Bosnia requires a sea change in the attitudes and conceptions of a goodly number of countries on this Council. Few areas, particularly Muslim ones, are being spared. Pitched battles have raged over the last twelve months; cities and towns have gone up in flames, killing tens of thousands and condemning the rest to the reprehensible practice of "ethnic cleansing", which has driven these the large majority of destitute people to severely overcrowded, insecure and inhumane destinations, or to wander hopelessly in other countries in Europe as refugees.

Famous historical and religious landmarks have been intentionally targeted and destroyed; this happened amongst people who had lived together for centuries. The sense of frustration and outrage inherent in Bosnia's tragedy is perhaps best epitomized by the woman who, together with hundreds of Muslim civilians evicted from their homes, was marched out of Mostar, down a mountain to a detention camp last month, and then broke down and sobbed:

"We are all Muslims; we are prisoners. This is a crime, a shame, and this is Europe!"

It looks more and more as if it is not only the Bosnians who have been herded and shunted into so-called "safe areas" by the continuing Serbian aggression, but the entire United Nations too. Having furiously and lavishly

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

painted the diplomatic and international landscape for the past year and a half with every imaginable colour and pattern while ignoring pleas to stop painting and come outside and do something, we now come to the realization that we have in effect painted ourselves into a corner.

It is tiresomely redundant for us to reel off yet again the litany of bold resolutions, pronouncements and statements that have emanated from the United Nations over this period, each of them pregnant with the implied threat of real United Nations intervention to halt the aggression. More and more it seems that the only party that realized it was all perhaps a bluff was the one it was most intended to fool: the Serbs.

The last major resolution we adopted, the "safe areas" resolution, was replete with such bold assertions as adherence to the Vance-Owen plan as the basis for peace; the territorial integrity of Bosnia; the reversal of gains achieved through aggression; the condemnation of human rights violations; the evil of "ethnic cleansing"; support for a war crimes Tribunal to bring the violators of human rights to justice, and so on and so on. There was also the open threat of stronger action if results were not forthcoming. We have all come to realize - the Serbs sooner than anyone - that the implied threat had all along been a veiled bluff: nothing of direct significance was to be done to halt the Serbs.

Even more worrisome, probably nothing is to be done to protect the "safe areas". This places the Bosnians in very grave danger: they obviously can no longer rely on the actions or words of the United Nations. Even the ubiquitous Lord Owen has begun to abandon his own ship.

Serb aggression, however, continues unabated, while the ever widening arms imbalance, coupled with the arms embargo, militates heavily against the

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

outgunned Muslims. This community is in a dire dilemma, and the available choices, if any, are most unappealing. The international community's paralysis of will has now hastened a carve-up of Bosnia along communal lines that will face the almost two million Muslims with the prospect of being forced out into an economically bankrupt mini-State. While the details are still sketchy, the public pronouncements of Serb and Croat nationalists leave us with no doubt that their devious strategy would force the Muslims, who comprised 44 per cent of the pre-war population with 34 per cent of the land, onto 10 per cent of its land.

What is happening in Geneva is therefore a direct challenge to the authority of President Alija Izetbegovic, the sole remaining symbol of legitimate leadership in Sarajevo. His crime is his insistence that Bosnia remain a single, multiracial, multicultural State. The Serb and Croat nationalists, in full view of their chief patrons, are carrying out a shabby and indecent plot to force the beleaguered and hapless Muslims into accepting the division of Bosnia.

But this Council has consistently reaffirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina: are we now to bend before the endorsement of any makeshift meeting that does not truly represent the constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina? In this respect, we draw some solace from the latest declaration of the European Council, issued in Copenhagen on 22 June, which, inter alia, encouraged the Co-Chairmen to pursue their efforts to promote a fair and viable settlement acceptable to all three constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The European Council stated that it would not accept a territorial solution dictated by the Serbs and Croats at the expense of the Bosnian Muslims. The declaration also reaffirmed

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

that a negotiated settlement must be based on the principles of the London Conference reflected in the Vance-Owen peace plan, and on the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force.

The bottom line is that the Bosnians face certain extinction. By default the Bosnians must protect themselves if they are to survive, for no one else is prepared to step in. That is the stark truth. Obviously, if the Bosnians are to defend and protect themselves, they must have the means to do so, and that requires a lifting of the arms embargo imposed by the Security Council in its resolution 713 (1991) as it applies to the Government of Bosnia, consistent with Article 51 of the Charter. We wholeheartedly support this initiative as the best measure to achieve peace, given the current realities of the situation unfolding in Bosnia. Whatever any of the players decides, accepts or negotiates to resolve this crisis, the chances of a continuation or resumption of hostilities will be lessened only if that continuation or resumption comes at a heavy price. But no one is ready to exact that price. Ironically, the most readily acceptable option has become to exact more and more from the helpless victims and pressure them to make concession after concession.

My delegation has lost all patience with the standard, often repeated and self-justifying cries for the arms status quo. We do not believe it will lead to the spread of a general Balkan war if a key victim is seen to defend itself. This must surely be the factor that would give pause to the aggressors. If, as we are told, the Serbs have completed their territorial aggression, then to put the Bosnians into a position to defend themselves should have only a positive bearing on the situation by putting a price on a resumption of hostilities.

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

Though arming the Bosnians might not enable them to reverse the results of the aggression, at this point that is not the issue: the issue is their survival, and who is to take responsibility for it. If the arming of Bosnia poses a threat to United Nations forces, then these forces should either be better armed and reinforced to protect themselves, removed to "safe areas" or removed completely out of danger. The Bosnians can no longer afford a United Nations Protection Force that, despite its formidable, heroic and humanitarian engagement, cannot even rattle its sabre in the face of the most gruesome atrocities - and this for lack of a mandate: in other words, for lack of political commitment on the part of the international community.

Finally, to claim that arming the Bosnians would halt the flow of humanitarian aid is a weak argument, considering the feebleness of such aid at present. The time has come, in our view, for candour and transparency, and for a real re-evaluation of our policy towards this unprecedented tragedy.

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

We all know what has happened in Bosnia and what is still taking place there. Those who oppose lifting the arms embargo as it applies to the Bosnians will have to not only repeat their litany of the dangers this move poses but also state flatly what they propose to do to ensure the safety and survival of the Bosnians, halt Serb aggression and end hostilities in the country. We suspect they are, in fact, prepared to do very little, which is why Bosnia must fully, within its rights as a sovereign Member of the United Nations, seek to protect itself.

My delegation fully supports this draft resolution to exempt the Bosnian Government from the arms embargo imposed on the former Yugoslavia by our resolution 713 (1991).

Mr. ARRIA (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): Article 51 of the Charter must be accepted and interpreted by all members of the Security Council without any form of discrimination. Just as yesterday we recognized as a fact one of our members' right to self-defence, we must do everything possible to see that, at the very least, that same right is not denied the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Today we are debating the possible consequences of adopting the draft resolution that we, the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement that are members of the Security Council - Cape Verde, Djibouti, Morocco, Pakistan and Venezuela - have brought before the Council, along with the reasons that form its basis and justification.

I shall now take the liberty of summing up the main considerations that, throughout our consultations and discussions, have been put forward by represenatives in the Council who oppose the adoption of this draft resolution. I shall also take the liberty of offering some thoughts on these objections and concerns.

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

The main objections to the draft resolution that we have heard are the following: first, it would increase the level of violence and the conflict would spread and intensify; secondly, there would be more war, not less - all the parties would acquire more sophisticated arms; thirdly, the negotiating process in Geneva would be put in jeopardy; fourthly, it would mean the end of the safe areas; fifthly, it would speed up the Serbian offensive against what remains of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which would be totally conquered; sixthly, humanitarian aid would be jeopardized; seventh, the personnel of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) would be withdrawn; and, eighth, it would be an admission that the Security Council had suffered a defeat in the face of this conflict.

Before I take up each of these objections, allow me to remind the Council that the arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia, which was decreed before the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina was internationally recognized, has affected only that Republic. It is generally accepted that the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats received and continue to receive all the military support and equipment of other countries in the region and that the Security Council has still not managed to stop that violation of the embargo.

Now I shall comment on the objections.

It would increase violence. About 200,000 people have already died. More than 2 million people have been displaced from their homes. Twenty thousand women have been raped. The International Court of Justice and the World Conference on Human Rights have indicated that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a victim of genocide and "ethnic cleansing", among other unspeakable crimes. For this Council, then, what does it mean to say that violence would increase and spread?

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

Obviously, an armed people would have a greater ability to defend itself - which does not mean that violence would necessarily increase. To date, the Serbs have found it very easy to trample and vandalize the Bosnian Muslims. When the latter are able to defend themselves, circumstances may deter the Serbs and, above all, place limits on their impunity.

More war? The international community's inconsistent attitude in the adoption of measures to stop aggression has given free rein to the escalation of the conflict, which has meant a massacre of mainly the Bosnian Muslim people. That is a reality.

The negotiating process in Geneva will be affected. Frankly, in Geneva what remained of the the Vance-Owen Plan has been replaced by the Karadzic-Milosevic-Tudjman-Bovan agreement. Why should the United Nations worry about affecting a process in which those who took a territory by force seek the legitimacy undoubtedly conferred on them by the presence - and not a passive presence - of Lord Owen and Mr. Stoltenberg at the site of the talks: the Palais des Nations in Geneva. I cannot understand how Lord Owen can declare that,

(spoke in English)

> "We have to stop this nonsense of decisions being taken by the Bosnian Government that are not discussed by the Government; we could do to Izetbegovic what Karadzic and Bovan do, which is to refer to him as the Muslim party."

(spoke in Spanish)

Even more difficult to understand is that the division of an already well-battered Government could be provoked in order to eliminate any obstacles in the way of the partition agreement being hatched in Geneva.

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

The United Nations cannot, must not, lend its name - which is that of all our nations, small, medium-sized and large - to the legitimization of the final ravaging of that Republic. The old colonial philosophy that says,

(spoke in English)

"There are times when considerations of abstract justice must give way to those of administrative expediency"

(spoke in Spanish)

must not be realized.

It would be the end of the safe areas. The whole world knows what those areas consist of and what they mean. To continue calling them by that name threatens to destroy what little credibility the Council has left in this conflict. For the past three months, Srebrenica, the first safe area, has been forcibly deprived of its services of potable water, electricity and medical care. Epidemics are devouring thousands of children caught between the cruelty of their Serbian jailers and our own inability to defend them.

In Gorazde, another safe area, no sooner do we manage to get a few trucks in and the area is once again under siege. Sarajevo, Tuzla, Bilhac and Zepa constitute the rest of the chain of atrocities. Those zones are definitely free and safe for committing all kinds of crimes and attacks. Those of us who have been there know this very well.

The Serbian offensive would be speeded up. This is very probably true, unless the international community decides to carry out the necessary compensatory actions to neutralize the heavy armaments which have been allowing the Serbs to act with all impunity. If this is not done, there is no doubt that a disarmed Government will in the end be worn down and conquered.

"What would the international community do then?" asked one of our Security Council colleagues in one of our meetings. There can only be one

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

answer: do everything necessary so that this does not come about, because if it did, Europe would never be the same, neither for itself nor for the rest of the world. In this regard, President González of Spain stated in Copenhagen,

> "If the international community is unable to resolve the problem by the means available to it and if it does not want to undertake a massive intervention in Yugoslavia, as seems obvious, the Bosnians' right to self-defence begins to emerge."

President Mitterrand of France said, "It is intolerable that the Muslims cannot defend themselves." And he reminded his colleagues in the European Community that the United Nations had decided to defend their safe areas and that the Secretary-General was still begging the Governments of the third world to provide 7,500 soldiers. President Mitterrand said,

> "If we were talking about the security of our own States, it would take us two hours, not weeks, to take that decision."

In conclusion he said,

> "If we cannot defend the safe areas, it will be impossible to tell the Bosnian Muslims that they will not be allowed to defend themselves."

To these statements of such distinguished statesmen can be added that of the Head of Government of Germany, Mr. Helmut Kohl:

> "The international community cannot be allowed to abandon the Bosnian Muslims. Lifting the arms embargo is a necessity and a moral duty, because it means helping the weakest."

And finally, the statement of Baroness Thatcher:

> "It is intolerable to prevent people from defending themselves, unless one is willing to defend them oneself."

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

It is further objected that humanitarian assistance would be compromised.

That would definitely be the case - although humanitarian assistance by air, transported by the United States, has reached places where UNPROFOR troops have never been able to go. In that sense, it is important to emphasize that humanitarian assistance was conceived as a mean of helping a people to survive while steps were taken to put an end to the conflict - but not to take the place of a more purposeful and significant effort. The point is not just to halt the outflow of refugees or to attend to the needs of a devastated people. Humanitarian assistance, as the Coordinator of Red Cross Operations - in the former Yugoslavia - described it,

> "has been used by the humanitarian organizations to fill a political vacuum created by the international community. We have been asked to throw flour at political problems. Convoys protected by the United Nations are subjected to all kinds of humiliation, creating the illusion of helping - and in fact they are helping, but they are far from resolving the problem."

He added:

> "The humanitarian organizations cannot take the place of political decisions. Governments should stop using humanitarian organizations for their own purposes."

In that respect, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Stoltenberg, recently informed the Security Council that the climate of insecurity in which the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNPROFOR and other humanitarian agencies operate has grown so acute that these operations cannot continue very much longer, given the intensification of the conflict. This information indicates that the humanitarian assistance is already extremely compromised.

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

The noble contingents of UNPROFOR have rendered extraordinary service, but, notwithstanding the fact that their mandate would permit it, they are not equipped or prepared to defend themselves appropriately. As my colleague the Ambassador of Djibouti has rightly pointed out, the option to be considered - calmly and in keeping with the gravity of the question - would be either to give a really effective mandate to these troops or to withdraw them. What cannot be envisaged is for them to protect only the humanitarian convoys and not the people.

The last of the objections is that this would recognize the defeat of the United Nations. The fact is that the Security Council inherited a situation that had very seriously deteriorated. Almost two years ago, at the beginning of the conflict, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, Mr. Jacques Poos, stated: "This is the hour of Europe, not the hour of the Americans". At that time, the effort was being made - in fact, an unsuccessful effort - to deal with the conflict regionally. Almost 40 resolutions later - and after the Security Council has supported the London Conference, the peace plans of Lord Carrington and of Vance and Owen, and the Washington plan of action - no one here today can deny that the aggressors have been progressively defeating this illustrious body that represents the international community.

It must be recognized, however, that we have managed to save thousands of lives through humanitarian assistance, but it is no less true that many more thousands of lives have been lost at a time when the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina has all but disappeared. Now the new plan has as its protagonists the chief aggressors against that Republic, and the international community continues striving assiduously, at any price, to bring about an agreement that would have to be imposed upon the victims.

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

The Security Council is not a debating society or a future-oriented think tank. For that reason, to speculate about and anticipate the consequences of the implementation of this resolution is not the proper business of the Council. In fact, what is its business - and indeed its obligation - is to see to it that the Charter of the United Nations is enforced.

In 1938, the Czechoslovak leader, Edvard Benes, was also described as intransigent. The prestigious Times of London went so far as to publish an editorial in which it pointed out that

"The Czechoslovak Government should consider making its country more homogeneous, ceding the Sudetans to Germany - the neighbouring country with which they are united by race".

This historical backdrop - actually very recent - has now sowed many dangerous seeds in the degenerating conflict in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the one hand, President Aliza Izetbegovic is described - just as Benes was - as intransigent, and Bosnia and Herzegovina is being compelled to cede to its Croat and Serb neighbours 90 per cent of its territory. What will be left will be perfectly homogeneous areas, within the spirit of the apartheid so often condemened by this Organization, which counts among its main achievements its struggle against apartheid.

Obviously, President Izetbegovic feels the same national passion as President Benes felt. His country is being dismembered, and he is on the way to losing it entirely. He cannot be less than intransigent.

It was not enough for Hitler to do away with Benes and with Czechoslovakia. The offer of "land for peace" was not enough for him. Nor will it be enough for the conquerors of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, after exterminating the Muslims of that Republic, and having understood that crime pays, are now extending their actions to the rest of the area.

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

For two years the illusion of a diplomacy of principles took us from the London Conference with Lord Carrington, to the peace plan of Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, and now to Geneva with Stoltenberg. All these illustrious diplomats have been effectively replaced as peace negotiators by Messrs. Milosevic, Tudjman, Karadzic and Boban.

No country or group of countries has the right to instruct a State, no matter how small or defenceless, on what it must or must not do. Not to come to the defence of and protect a State victim of genocide and ethnic cleansing is, as the International Court of Justice has pointed out, without any doubt a most alarming development. To do all that one can possibly do to prevent a people from exercising its right to defend itself in order to survive means to shoulder moral and political responsibilities of extraordinary significance. It is one thing to decide not to help a State that bases its preservation on the principle of collective security; it is another thing entirely to deny it its natural right to self-defence, in the face of the obvious decision not to implement that principle. Those who today would make that decision, through their vote, shoulder the corresponding responsibility before the world.

The draft resolution that we are discussing today is above all a declaration of moral and political principles. We trust that the Security Council will vote in favour of the draft resolution, because defending the rights of States can never be conceived of as a minority position.

At the recent World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, a group of delegations - including my own - upheld the concept of the universality of human rights. Therefore, I cannot imagine that the very same countries would not today agree with the universality of the inalienable rights of States to self-defence.

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

In Geneva negotiations took place first with the Croatian side and then with the Serbian side, but, strangely, when it came to negotiating with the Muslim side of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was agreed to bring in seven members of the presidency of that Republic: three Croatians, three Serbs and one Muslim. But unfortunately for its promoters, this Muslim, who was entrusted with subscribing to the rules for the partition of his country, is now being sought by the Austrian police for the crime of fraud against the poor Muslim refugees.

President Izetbegovic, incredibly, has been pushed aside for his "hotheadedness" in insisting that the "peace plan" promoted by the United Nations and the European Community - the Vance-Owen plan - be implemented.

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

Why has this happened? What has President Izetbegovic done, he who is recognized by the entire international community as the legitimate President of his country and until recently the valid interlocutor of the negotiators at the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia? Quite simply, President Izetbegovic - like Benes, like Churchill, like De Gaulle, like the valient people of Leningrad - did not agree to surrender, not even under the worst possible conditions. Mr. Izetbegovic reminds me of the 1938 message of the great intransigent Sir Winston Churchill: "Those who seek to prevent war without honour will end up suffering dishonour and war".

To conclude, I deem it appropriate to recall today that the European Community took the initiative of recognizing the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and that subsequently this lofty body, the Security Council, after an exhaustive and painstaking consideration, recommended to the General Assembly its admission to membership of this Organization. Almost two years have passed since those events. That recognition was not given lightly. It seems incredible that barely two years after Bosnia and Herzegovina was admitted as a Member State, the Security Council can remain passive before the imminent partition of that Republic through territorial conquest by use of force and "ethnic cleansing".

The Security Council must be consistent and shoulder the responsibility it assumed in recommending the admission of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina to membership of the United Nations and not keep that State from the means necessary to safeguard its own existence, as provided for in the resolution on which we shall vote shortly. To do otherwise would be to admit an inconsistency of the most extreme gravity.

Sir David HANNAY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): The British Government has, from the very beginning of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, been at the forefront of international attempts to find solutions. We have spared no effort to achieve a negotiated peace, to bring help to the victims, to check the rampant abuse of human rights and to punish those responsible for carrying out or assisting in aggressive action in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia through the most Draconian set of economic sanctions ever imposed by the United Nations. In these endeavours we have not been sparing of men, money and political support, principally through the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. Substantial British military forces in the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) have saved the lives of many thousands of Bosnians of all three communities. Many British civilian helpers have participated in the huge international relief effort. The financial contributions of Britain and its European Community partners to all these efforts have far exceeded those of any other country or group of countries.

We regret that a political settlement has not yet been achieved. But the United Nations cannot simply impose a political solution. The only way to enforce peace in that way would be the despatch of a massive army to be deployed in Bosnia for an indefinite period. No Government has seriously suggested that. The present situation is deeply worrying, but in the view of my Government it should not be a cause for despair nor should it be seen as a reason for adopting what we regard as a solution of despair. That is how we see the proposal to lift the arms embargo.

There are a number of reasons why we believe that such a decision would, in practice, fail to help the people it is designed to assist, the Bosnian Muslims, and would more probably result in a deterioration of the situation

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

and a collapse of the international and above all the United Nations efforts to solve the crisis. For one thing, it would clearly result in an increase in the fighting, all the more so because, given Bosnia's geographical situation, it is simply not credible to believe that a relaxation of the arms embargo would result in the arms reaching only the Bosnian Government forces. It is already the case that a substantial proportion of the arms clandestinely destined for Bosnia fall into other hands. Moreover, a decision to lift the arms embargo would provide a probably irresistible temptation to the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats to intensify their military efforts and to ensure that, by the time any substantial delivery of weapons was made, the military threat posed to them by the Bosnian Government forces had been neutralised.

In addition to these drawbacks, we do not see how the United Nations current efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina could be sustained following a decision to lift the arms embargo and the inevitable intensification of the fighting. That is, we understand, the view of the Secretary-General; it is the view of the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference; it is the view of the commander of UNPROFOR; and it is the view of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The work of UNPROFOR, which has already saved thousands of lives and is essential to the survival of so many in Bosnia and Herzegovina, would be fatally prejudiced; the devoted efforts of the international relief agencies under the leadership of UNHCR would be similarly undermined; and the peace process in Geneva would be set back if not destroyed. Above all, the adoption of this draft resolution would be seen as a signal that the United Nations was turning its back on Bosnia and leaving its inhabitants to fight it out, come what may.

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

These, broadly speaking, are the reasons why my Government could not support the present draft resolution and hopes that it will not pass. We respect the views and the sincerity of those who have put it forward but we regret that this issue, so divisive in the Council, is being pressed to a vote. We regret this in particular because the unity of this Council in handling what is recognised by all as being the most complex and difficult international issue that has faced the Council in recent years is an absolute prerequisite to achieving results. We hope that unity will soon be found again and we for our part intend to work for it. That is the reason why I do not intend to reply to some rather intemperate and unfounded remarks made by the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As I said earlier, the British Government has been at the forefront of efforts to solve this crisis and we intend to continue that endeavour. On the ground in Bosnia, we believe that top priority must now be given to making the safe areas safer. No one suggests that the safe areas are a solution in themselves; they are a measure designed to stop the situation from deteriorating and to protect the lives of many thousands of innocent refugees. We are encouraged by the response so far to the decisions of this Council to reinforce UNPROFOR with 7,500 troops and to back up those troops with the deterrent threat of air strikes.

In addition, the economic sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro are a crucial part of the international community's efforts to bring about a lasting and equitable solution. They must be sustained and strengthened in their application. Goods are still getting through despite the efforts of the Sanctions Advisory Missions of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and of so many of the Governments bordering on Serbia and Montenegro.

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

It is crucial that the Bosnian Serbs and the authorities in Belgrade understand that there will be no easing or lifting of these sanctions until the conditions set out in the Security Council resolutions, most recently in resolution 820 (1993), have been fulfilled.

We also believe that this Council must do everything in its power to sustain and nourish the peace process. That does not mean that we should support solutions which would be inequitable for one of the communities in Bosnia. But it does mean that we should not falter in our willingness to look at any approach which offers some hope of winning the support of all three communities. The key thing is to stand firmly on the principles enunciated by the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia with a view to assuring the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to use as many of the building-blocks contained in the Vance-Owen peace plan, even if the territorial map proposed in that plan is now no longer a viable one. The European Council meeting at Copenhagen last week reaffirmed its support for the efforts of the Co-Chairmen to reach a settlement on this basis. The present round of discussions in Geneva is at a crucial point. It is certainly too soon to say that a solution is emerging but it is also too soon to write off those efforts or to damage them before they have taken proper shape and can be judged against the basic principles that any solution will have to fulfil if it is to get the support of the international community.

In conclusion, I would repeat again the hope of my Government that in the wake of this debate and the vote on this draft resolution, which we would much rather have avoided, it will be possible to recreate a united effort by this Council to bring peace to the former Yugoslavia and a lasting and equitable solution to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. MERIMEE (France) (interpretation from French): My Government believes that the draft resolution should not be adopted, for reasons of principle, timing and substance.

I begin with the reasons of principle. The role of the United Nations and the Security Council is not to organize for war or to wage war. According to the Charter, it is to contribute to the settlement of conflict by peaceful means. Deciding to lift the arms embargo selectively would mean, contrary to the principles of the Charter, setting out on the path of war and not of peace.

The inapportune timing also militates against the draft resolution. The proposed decision could only interfere disastrously with the Geneva talks. A negotiating process is now under way. So long as it is continuing we have reasons for hope and we have the duty to encourage the search for agreement between the parties - all the parties.

Moreover, by its resolutions 836 (1993) and 844 (1993) the Security Council decided to establish safe areas and guarantee their protection. It is clear that the safe areas and lifting the arms embargo reflect totally opposite rationales. Such a decision on the embargo would put an end to those areas. The French Government believes that the safe areas, however imperfect, must be given the maximum possible chance. In the very serious situation prevailing in Bosnia and Herzegovina any action that may save human lives must have priority. It is true that these are temporary measures, but they can be implemented. According to information from the Secretariat, more than 6,000 men can be made available by the contributing countries at this stage. As the Council knows, France has just taken on new commitments to strengthen the protection of the areas.

(Mr. Mérimée, France)

I should like finally to refer to the reasons of substance why my Government is opposed to lifting the arms embargo. Such a decision could have very dangerous consequences for the very existence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and therefore consequences that are contrary to the goal of the authors of the draft resolution. That is all the more true since the deletion of the former paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, which envisaged the possibility of air strikes against heavy weapons in order to support the Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There would then be a real danger of a massive and possibly decisive offensive by the Serbs, and even by the Croats, against the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That would mean even greater losses, new territorial conquests and even the disappearance, pure and simple, of that State. The alternative prospect, if the Muslims managed to contain the offensive, would be of an internationalization of the conflict. Can we, by what would amount to incitement to war, assume the crushing burden of contributing to an expansion of the conflict? Should we take a decision whose inevitable consequence would be the withdrawal of United Nations troops and an end to humanitarian aid? We do not opt for those very serious prospects.

That is why, while understanding the motives of the sponsors of the draft resolution, my Government cannot support such a text, which runs counter to the policy of seeking a peaceful, lasting settlement to the conflict. That is the line we follow, which was affirmed in the Washington statement of 22 May and the statement of the European Council of 22 June.

I should like to add one point, inspired by certain statements. France does not limit itself to merely talking. It acts. We have sent soldiers to Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the beginning of July my country will have 6,300 men on the soil of the former Yugoslavia. We have already lost 11 men. If

(Mr. Mérimée, France)

the whole world had done as much the representative of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina would have had less to include in his plea. The situation would be different. My country, which is committed on the soil of Bosnia and Herzegovina, will not accept lessons in morality from anyone.

Mr. VORONTSOV (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): The delegation of the Russian Federation cannot accept draft resolution S/25997.

The position of principle of the Russian Federation on the Bosnian crisis is that we should aim for a halt to the war as soon as possible, achieving a political settlement and speeding up the process of seeking a formula for a peaceful settlement which would satisfy all three sides within the context of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Implementing the proposal in the draft resolution to lift the arms embargo on the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina would not increase the chances of achieving such a settlement; on the contrary, it would simply open up the floodgates for an escalation of the war in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This could lead to results completely the opposite of the goals proclaimed in the draft resolution by its authors.

Adopting the draft resolution could set off a chain reaction of military and political steps by the Bosnian authorities which could fan even more the fire of military action. The Geneva negotiating process, with the participation of all three Bosnian sides, would be jeopardized, as would the United Nations operation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole and the security of the contingents of Member States of the United Nations currently deployed in that country.

(Mr. Vorontsov, Russian Federation)

The Russian delegation has already had occasion to draw the attention of the authors of the draft resolution to the fact that lifting the arms embargo on the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina would push that country into an even bigger war and lead to a sharp deterioration of the situation and an increase in the hostilities, the bloodshed, the suffering and the death of the civilian population on a scale unprecedented to date in that country.

Moreover, there would be a real danger that the conflict would spread beyond the boundaries of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and that neighbouring countries would become directly involved. The decision would place insuperable barriers in the way of efforts by the international community to find a resolution to the conflict and to ease the situation of hundreds of thousands of people.

It is clear that under such circumstances it would be impossible to ensure implementation of the decision taken by the Security Council to create safe areas and to adopt other measures to limit or end the conflict.

Such developments would essentially be the exact opposite of what is currently a possibility: achievement of agreement between the Bosnian sides on a settlement of the conflict. The first round of talks between the parties in Geneva shows that in direct contacts with each other they may find ways of reaching agreement, elaborating new approaches in keeping with the present realities. We believe that in the near future during their further talks they will be able to move forward and achieve a definitive settlement.

(Mr. Vorontsov, Russian Federation)

The Security Council cannot allow this real chance of finding a political settlement to be lost. We must understand that there is simply no alternative to such a settlement. Any attempts to impose a decision by military means or by force would simply lead to further fratricide and devastation.

(Mr. Vorontsov, Russian Federation)

In our view, any settlement in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina that is to be lasting and viable must take account of the following points: there must be a real cessation of hostilities by all parties, with very firm measures against those who violate the cease-fire; full account must be taken of the legitimate concerns of all three parties; the territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina must be preserved, irrespective of what decision is taken on the country's internal structure - federation or confederation; there can be no recognition of the consolidation of territorial or other gains won by force or through "ethnic cleansing"; and the parties must make possible full implementation of all relevant resolutions and decisions of the Security Council, including those related to the security of United Nations peace-keeping forces and of humanitarian-assistance deliveries.

To the extent possible, whatever is done must be based on the experiences, concepts and principles of the London Conference, the Vance-Owen plan and the Washington Joint Action Programme. We must preserve the requirement for agreement or consensus on international action on matters related to Bosnia; this is an absolute prerequisite for reaching and implementing any Bosnian settlement.

We were pleased to note that the decision taken on 22 June by the European Council was largely consonant with that approach.

We support the peacemaking efforts of the international mediators, Lord Owen and Mr. Stoltenberg, and are willing to participate actively in promoting a settlement, including further efforts by the special representative of the President of the Russian Federation to the talks on the former Yugoslavia.

(Mr. Vorontsov, Russian Federation)

We are trying to help establish a framework for a successful conclusion to the negotiating process, one that would preserve the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is composed of its three communities. This must be achieved by civilized means, not by diktat or force. Only in that way can we quench the fires of war and restore peace to the land of Yugoslavia, which has suffered so greatly.

Russia continues to support the concept of safe areas and of building up an international presence in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as one way of making progress towards a peaceful settlement.

Adopting a resolution lifting the arms embargo could actually neutralize the entire United Nations operation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In view of what I have said, the Russian Federation would regard the adoption of draft resolution S/25997 as inadvisable and counterproductive.

Mr. MARUYAMA (Japan): Japan is deeply concerned over the continuing grave situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It fully shares the view that effective measures should be taken to ensure an immediate cessation of hostilities and a political solution to the conflict. After carefully studying the draft resolution before us, however, my Government has arrived at the painful decision that it cannot support it, for the following reasons:

First, Japan is concerned that the lifting of the arms embargo proposed in the draft resolution would most certainly escalate military hostilities in the area and in fact, by intensifying the violence, would eliminate the possibility of resolving this conflict by peaceful political means. The result would be that the people would have to fight it out. We find it difficult to agree with such a solution.

(Mr. Maruyama, Japan)

Secondly, Japan contirues to support the efforts of the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia to achieve a just and lasting peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it remains steadfast in its conviction that the conflict there must be settled through negotiations. It is concerned that the draft resolution would adversely affect the renewed efforts being made in Geneva at this very critical juncture.

My Government is also concerned that lifting the arms embargo would negatively affect the humanitarian assistance being provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other international humanitarian agencies, which is essential to alleviate the plight of the civilian population. Only recently the Council adopted its safe-areas resolution. Full and rapid implentation of that resolution is of great importance.

We once again call upon all parties concerned to intensify their renewed efforts to achieve a mutually acceptable solution through negotiation, rather than seeking a solution by force. We urge them to engage in the talks in good faith to achieve a just end lasting peace.

Mr. ERDÖS (Hungary) (interpretation from French): Faced with the tragedy in Bosnia and Herzegovina - which has no precedent in post-Second-World-War European history - Hungary's feelings are similar to those of the sponsors of the draft resolution before us today. We have followed developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a deathly feeling in our soul, and we share the deep frustration this conflict arouses in many. It is painful to have to admit that the international community has so far failed in its attempts to find a solution to the crisis. Aggression, "ethnic cleansing"

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

and intolerance are achieving a most spectacular triumph, which poses a mortal threat to the future of a State Member of the United Nations.

Hungary continues to endorse the principles set out in the draft resolution, including the cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal from territories occupied by force, reversal of the consequences of the policy of "ethnic cleansing", and restoration of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Hungary thinks it enormously important to make a clear distinction between the aggressor and the victim of aggression. If some cannot or do not wish to make that distinction, if some merely take note that aggression has occurred, that is a dismal portent for the future of the world. There is no doubt that the policy of systematic accommodation and resignation and the policy of simply accepting faits accomplis will encourage all forces in the region and elsewhere who are considering settling their problems by invading other peoples and devastating their lands.

Hungary considers it intolerable that one of the parties to the conflict - the strongest - continues to be supplied with weapons from outside sources while another party - the Government of the country which is the victim of the aggression - has no such ability. The point is to halt all supplies of weapons and ammunition to Bosnia and Herzegovina. To that end international inspection facilities should be set up along all the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as indicated in resolution 838 (1993). The Serbs' heavy weapons must be placed under effective control; these are the weapons responsible for so much of the massacre. They have become the symbol for this bizarre war, a symbol that stands for the Serb military. The Security Council need only apply its own resolutions.

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

It is undeniable that today the Security Council is in a very delicate situation. Hungary believes that these same principles must guide the Council and be applied in settling all the crises that are troubling our world. The international community has in fact recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign, independent country, and all the measures contemplated in this context must be determined on the basis of this act of recognition or on the basis of the fact that that State is a Member of the United Nations. The question that we are asking ourselves is whether, in the present circumstances, the actions envisaged in the draft resolution would be capable, in reality, of promoting a solution to the Bosnian problem and if the measures it contemplates would be likely to bring the end of this tragedy any closer.

We continue to bear in mind that one of the possible options, given the challenge presented by the war of aggression in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is lifting the arms embargo on the Bosnian Government. Hungary does not rule out that option; it does not exclude it, in principle, a priori, because it is so evident that the situation that obtained in September 1991 when the measures pursuant to Security Council resolution 713 (1991) were adopted bear very little resemblance to the present state of affairs.

However, after carefully weighing the various arguments concerning the draft resolution before us, we have arrived at the conclusion that, under present circumstances, lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia and Herzegovina would not necessarily have a positive impact on subsequent developments in that country and its vicinity. Here we are thinking of the very likely possibility of renewed military offensives against the territories that are

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

still under Government control, of the renewed human suffering, of the end of international humanitarian operations and of the dangers that lie in wait for international personnel in the former Yugoslavia.

In our opinion, lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia and Herzegovina would be to admit the irreversible failure, and the end, of the efforts aimed at seeking a negotiated, political solution to the war. The Security Council is now in a position where it must appreciate the true weight of its responsibility, as defined in the Charter, for maintaining international peace and security. It must act with all wisdom, and in doing so learn the lessons of its bitter experience so far.

Today there is a feeling in the Security Council - and this is a feeling that, let us admit it, does not necessarily reflect preferences within the United Nations as a whole, which rather tends to favour supporting the recent efforts by the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia - that the current, crucial dealings between the protagonists to the conflict should be given a chance. We cannot conceal the fact that this road is strewn with many dangers, but before we turn to the ultimate weapon available to the international community - before we take that step - Hungary, which is very concerned by the present situation and by the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the whole region, would wish to give a last chance to the tireless efforts aimed at achieving a solution to the crisis in that country that is worthy of the noble values of our civilization at the end of the twentieth century.

These are the reasons which lead Hungary to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution in document S/25997.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I shall now put the draft resolution (S/25997) to the vote.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour: Cape Verde, Djibouti, Morocco, Pakistan, United States of America, Venezuela

Against: None

Abstaining: Brazil, China, France, Hungary, Japan, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The result of the voting is as follows: 6 votes in favour, none against and 9 abstentions. The draft resolution has therefore not been adopted, it having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mrs. ALBRIGHT (United States of America): My Government has consistently advocated lifting the arms embargo imposed by the Council on the Government of Bosnia. In fact, our views on lifting the embargo have not changed since Secretary Christopher first presented them. In voting "yes" on today's draft resolution, the United States reaffirms its belief that the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a sovereign State and Member of the United Nations, has a right to defend itself. This is not a perfect solution, but the arms embargo mandated by the Council has had an unintended yet devastating effect in favour of the aggressor: it has frozen in place a vast disparity in arms. We do not believe that this body should deny the Bosnian Government the wherewithal to defend itself in the face of brutal aggression conducted by the Bosnian Serbs and their backers in Belgrade.

(Mrs. Albright, United States)

We therefore regret that the Council was unable to adopt the resolution under consideration today.

Although the Council has not chosen to act today on the arms embargo, it would be a grave mistake for the Bosnian Serbs to interpret today's action by the Council as an endorsement of their intransigence or of their attempts to use military force to change international boundaries and destroy a neighbour. Nor should today's vote be seen as an indication that the international community is willing to turn a blind eye to the gross violations of human rights that have been committed in Bosnia, primarily by the Bosnian Serbs. We will continue to insist that, if the authorities in Belgrade want to rejoin the family of nations, they will have to stop the violence, stop the killing, stop their aggressive war against the Bosnian State and comply with all relevant Security Council resolutions. Until that day, the Council will have no choice but to keep the pressure on.

Our goal remains a negotiated settlement freely agreed to by all the parties. The United States believes that exempting the Bosnian Government from the arms embargo is a means to that end.

The Council must continue to look for ways to restore its credibility on this issue. We must continue to make clear that the status quo is unacceptable. In the face of continued obstructionism, my Government continues to believe that all options for new and tougher measures must remain open. No option should be prejudged or excluded from consideration.

Mr. LI Zhaoxing (China) (interpretation from Chinese): Since the outbreak of the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina, China has always hoped that the parties concerned would make concerted efforts to find an early solution to the conflict by peaceful means. In conjunction with the international community, we have made our own contributions to this end. At present, the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is deteriorating, characterized by the escalation of conflict and ever-deepening suffering of its people. The Chinese delegation cannot but express its deep concern and profound sympathy. We therefore fully understand the concern and anxiety shown by the non-aligned and Muslim countries over the fate of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(Mr. Li Zhaoxing, China)

The Chinese delegation holds that the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of all United Nations Member States should be fully respected by the international community, as enshrined in the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, which constitutes a basic norm guiding international relations. We therefore support such elements in the draft resolution as immediate cessation of hostilities, full respect for and guarantee of the independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and recognition of the right of all Bosnian refugees to return to their homes. However, based on our consistent principled position of finding by peaceful means a negotiated political solution to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Chinese delegation abstained on the vote on the draft resolution.

Mr. de ARAUJO CASTRO (Brazil): It is with a deep sense of the gravity of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina that my delegation takes part in the deliberations of the Security Council today.

Having followed with great concern the continuing deterioration of the conflict in that country, the Government of Brazil is conscious of the unbearable degree of violence and insecurity imposed on the innocent civilian populations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the scourges of ethnic hatred and intolerance have returned with blind fury, in disdain of the most basic rules of international humanitarian law.

My delegation therefore understands and sympathizes with the objectives that inspired the non-aligned members of the Security Council to take the decision - which we fully respect - of requesting that the draft resolution contained in document S/25997 be put to the vote.

(Mr. de Araujo Castro, Brazil)

Many of the elements contained in the draft resolution deserve our unreserved support. We are in agreement with the principles on which a solution to the conflict should be based, as spelt out in the preambular part of the text. An immediate cessation of hostilities must continue to be sought. The abhorrent practice that came to be known as "ethnic cleansing" must stop at once, and steps should be taken to reverse its terrible consequences, including by allowing all refugees to return to their homes. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, as elsewhere, the acquisition of territories by the use of force cannot be tolerated by the international community.

Notwithstanding those considerations, my delegation was not in a position to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Brazil continues to believe in the overwhelming importance of seeking a comprehensive political solution to the Bosnian conflict. We also maintain that the international community must aim its actions and decisions at restraining and putting an end to the armed conflict and should avoid the risk that, as a consequence of its actions and decisions, war might escalate or expand. We are highly appreciative of the extraordinary work that has been carried out both by the United Nations Protection Force and the humanitarian agencies present in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we would not like to see those efforts brought prematurely to an end. Furthermore, there appear to be grounds to fear that some of the measures envisaged in the draft resolution, if they were to be implemented, could prompt drastic actions which would affect the very populations that we would be trying to protect.

We are certain that all members of the Security Council - and, indeed, of the United Nations - share the ultimate objective of finding an equitable and sustainable solution for the unspeakably tragic conflict that rages in Bosnia

(Mr. de Araujo Castro, Brazil)

and Herzegovina. At this stage, however, we are not convinced that some of the specific measures proposed in the draft resolution would be helpful in attaining that goal. It is the view of the Brazilian Government that the international community should not give up on the hope of reaching a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Mr. KEATING (New Zealand): New Zealand shares the deep sense of frustration about the situation in Bosnia that gave rise to this draft resolution. The draft resolution responded to the concern we all have that something must be done. However, we believe that a durable solution to the situation in Bosnia should come through intensified efforts towards a political settlement.

New Zealand has supported and continues to support United Nations humanitarian efforts and Security Council measures, such as sanctions, designed to persuade the parties of the need to look for a political solution. We have contributed military personnel as United Nations military observers in Yugoslavia.

But the action proposed in the draft resolution before the Council was of a quite different nature. Lifting the arms embargo would, in our view, immediately intensify the military pressure on the Bosnian forces, and that would inevitably result in many more civilian casualties and many more refugees. Just as inevitably, it would force an end to the United Nations humanitarian operations.

In our view, it may still be possible for the principles of the Vance-Owen plan to be forged into a settlement agreeable to all parties. It is certainly our hope that they can be, and we should be very careful at this point not to prejudice that possibility.

(Mr. Keating, New Zealand)

What does seem clear to us is that adopting this draft resolution would have resulted in an intensified, head-on military confrontation. It would have shut the door on any remaining chance for any peaceful resolution of the situation, and it would have been seen, ultimately, as an abdication of the responsibility of the United Nations to do its utmost to contribute to a peaceful settlement. In essence, we believe that the draft resolution would not have achieved the objective that was sought.

It may be that at some point the Council will have to admit that a negotiated solution has eluded it and take appropriate action. We certainly hope not, but we think it would be premature to do so now.

The Council's decision must not be misinterpreted as meaning the Council has turned its back on the Bosnian people. Quite the contrary: the Council established safe areas under resolution 836 (1993), and I would remind all parties that the Council has decided to respond with force if those areas are threatened. We now need to address urgently the practical implementation of the safe areas.

I think we also need to be fully and regularly informed by the Secretary-General's Special Represenatative about the progress of the discussions in Geneva. As I have said, it is New Zealand's view that those negotiations still provide the best hope for a durable political settlement, but I must emphasize that it would be unacceptable for the negotiations to move towards an outcome that was grossly disadvantageous to one of the parties, such as the partition of Bosnia or the acquisition of territory by force. That would simply sow the seeds of future conflagration. That is the message the Special Representative must convey in Geneva, and the Council must continue to monitor developments very closely.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Spain.

The debate the Security Council has held today has made it clear that, quite apart from the positions taken by the various sides, we all share the same feeling of anguish and frustration at the continuation of the horrible conflict assailing the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, notwithstanding the efforts exerted so far by the international community.

Spain, in any event, understands and indeed, in large measure, shares the motivations of the countries that sponsored the draft resolution that has been voted on today. In particular, we uphold positions that are very similar to the basic principles on which the solution to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be based.

I wish to recall in this context that Spain, together with the other countries members of the European Community, has recently reaffirmed, at the meeting of the Council of Europe held in Copenhagen on 22 June, that any negotiated solution to the conflict must be based on the principles of the London Conference, summed up in the Vance-Owen peace plan, and in particular on the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the protection of human rights and the rights of minorities, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, the vital need that humanitarian assistance be provided to and reach those who need it, and the bringing to justice of those who have committed war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law.

(The President)

However, the delegation of Spain abstained in the voting that took place today because it is convinced that the anguish, frustration and, indeed, despair that we feel must not prompt us to take measures that might prove to have negative consequences and in fact be prejudicial to those whom we are trying to help.

Indeed, it is our view that lifting the arms embargo, even though only partially, would lead to an escalation of the violence and would only contribute to increasing the suffering of the civilian population. What would doubtless happen would be not just a quantitative but also a qualitative upsurge in the fighting, as new and more modern weapons streamed in and reached the hands of all the combatants - not merely one of the parties.

Moreover, the measures proposed in this draft resolution would, in our judgement, escalate the risk of an expansion of the conflict, with potentially extremely serious consequences for the entire region.

Yet another consideration which weighed heavily in our decision was the conviction that lifting the arms embargo would be incompatible with the maintenance of the presence of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that, therefore, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the other humantarian agencies would not be able to continue their important work of helping the civilian population - and two-thirds of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina depend on those bodies for their survival.

We also feel that the adoption of this draft resolution would not have been appropriate at this particular time, since it would have introduced a disturbing element, which would probably have had an adverse effect on the process of talks under way in Geneva, where we hope a negotiated solution will be found that will bring an end to the conflict.

(The President)

In that context, I should like also to recall that the Council of Europe in Copenhagen formally declared that it would not accept a territorial solution dictated by the Serbs and the Croats of Bosnia at the expense of the Bosnian Muslims; at the same time, it expressed its full confidence in the co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia and urged them to pursue their efforts to promote a just and viable solution for the three peoples making up Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It is our view, in particular, that we must not now abandon the efforts to achieve the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, and in particular resolutions 836 (1993) and 844 (1993), recently adopted on the question of safe areas. Guided by that spirit, the Heads of State or Government of the States members of the European Community committed themselves in Copenhagen to responding positively to the request by the Secretary-General that troops and other resources be furnished for the enhanced protection of the safe areas, and issued an appeal to the other members of the international community to do their part.

If all these efforts do not bear the hoped-for fruit, Spain, together with the other countries that signed the joint plan of action issued in Washington on 22 May last, remains ready to consider, in due course, recourse to new and more forceful measures, without prejudging or excluding consideration of any of them.

We are, however, convinced that that time has not yet come. We remain confident that reason will prevail and that the parties will manage to reach a solution to the conflict by means of negotiation.

(The President)

I conclude by expressing the hope and the firm desire that we shall soon see re-established the unity and cohesion of the Security Council that have inevitably been affected by the vote taken today. It is essential to ensure that the weight of the international community is brought to bear on all the parties, particularly the Serbian party, so that a just and lasting solution can be found to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no further names on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideraton of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 8.45 p.m.